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RUEHWR/AMEMBASSY WARSAW 0211
RUEHCD/AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUAREZ 0191
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 0192
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RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 000192

SIPDIS

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STATE FOR AF/W
STATE FOR INR/AA
DOE FOR CAROLYN GAY
WARSAW FOR LISA PIASCIK
CIUDAD JUAREZ FOR DONNA BLAIR
ISTANBUL FOR TASHAWNA SMITH
SAO PAULO FOR ANDREW WITHERSPOON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/15/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [NI](#)
SUBJECT: GOVERNOR KALU VOWS TO FIGHT OBASANJO TO THE END

REF: ABUJA 154

LAGOS 00000192 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: Consul General Brian L. Browne for reasons 1.4 (b and d)

11. (C) Summary: In a late February conversation with the Consul General, Progressive People's Alliance (PPA) presidential candidate Governor Orji Kalu said President Obasanjo hoped to so rankle the opposition that members of the opposition would react dramatically. Obasanjo would use that dramatic response as a pretext to postpone the election. While he thought the President was baiting him, Kalu was not sure he could resist the temptation. Kalu spoke of collaboration with militants in the Niger Delta to announce secession from Nigeria. The meeting was replete with the usual rodomontade, particularly the secession bluster. However, Kalu's angry frustration reflects Southern opposition politicians' views on what they would call the President's imperious handling of the electoral process. End summary.

Kalu in a Combative Mood

12. (C) In a late February conversation with the Consul General, Progressive People's Alliance (PPA) presidential candidate and Abia State Governor Governor Orji Kalu appeared to be deriving some pleasure from his running feud with President Obasanjo and the Federal Government (FG). A former member of the ruling party, Kalu complained about his inclusion on the Independent National Electoral Commission's (INEC) list of people ineligible for elections. Kalu said INEC's decision was part of an Obasanjo ploy to stymie him and other opposition candidates such as Lagos Governor Bola Tinubu. By attacking Tinubu and him, Kalu said Obasanjo hoped these political mavericks would do something rash, illegal and possibly violent. Obasanjo would cite the resultant confusion and political uncertainty as a pretext to postpone the election.

Kalu Courts a Secession Scenario

¶3. (C) While believing that Obasanjo was attempting to entrap him, Kalu admitted his competitive nature was tempting him to take the bait. Kalu told the Consul General he had been in dialogue with militants from the South-South. According to Kalu, many militants were so disenchanted they would be ready to call for the South-South to secede from Nigeria. Kalu said he was primed to join the Delta militants in announcing the secession of his State and the Delta from Nigeria. (Comment: While Kalu's comments were exaggerated, they do reveal that he and others are beginning to think of drastic measures. Albeit, and despite his bluster, he might still be some distance away from putting these ideas into motion. End comment) The Consul General advised Kalu against talk of Abia secession, and encouraged Kalu to follow legal channels to resolve his perceived grievances.

¶4. (C) Returning to a more reasonable scenario, Kalu said he had spoken with opposition forces to unite to prevent electoral rigging by the People's Democratic Party (PDP). When the Consul General asked if Kalu was still considering a joint ticket with another major candidate, Kalu said he would not object but Ohaneze Ndigbo, the leading pan-Igbo social organization, had selected him as the Igbo favorite son presidential candidate. Kalu felt he could not unilaterally agree to run as Vice-President with Muhammadu Buhari or Atiku Abubakar without first getting the green light from Ohaneze. (Note: Although the INEC deadlines are more honored in their breach, Kalu joining another ticket is unlikely because Buhari and Atiku have already chosen Igbo vice-presidential candidates and are not likely to dump these more stable partners for one as independent-minded and unpredictable as Kalu. End note)

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Kalu Strikes Back

¶5. (C) Subsequent to the conversation, Kalu established an administrative panel of inquiry in his State. That panel indicted the People's Democratic Party (PDP) presidential ticket of Umaru Yar'Adua and Goodluck Jonathan, as well as President Obasanjo, on charges of corruption. Through this act, Kalu was clearly attempting to travesty the panel the federal government had instituted to indict him and others, which led to INEC declaring him ineligible. Nevertheless, Kalu's action introduces an interesting constitutional point.

The constitution does not distinguish between a federal or state panel regarding the electoral ineligibility for a person indicted by such a panel. Kalu could pursue this matter through the courts. If so, it might place a court on the horns of an interesting dilemma regarding Yar'Adua's candidacy. In the meantime, this move is but a droplet of rain on the PDP parade as the FG and the PDP will ignore Kalu's panel and its findings unless a court says otherwise.

Comment

¶6. (C) The combative Kalu enjoys tangling with Obasanjo. That is obvious. Almost as clear is that Kalu has little chance as a Presidential candidate. But he will continue to add more spice to an already tart electoral recipe, and his attention-grabbing antics will keep the PDP on its toes. Though Kalu may trumpet his endorsement by Ohaneze, Kalu's spotty second term performance will make it difficult for him to carry the Southeast en masse. However, Kalu could pick up many votes in that region. The more votes he attracts, the greater grows the possibility of a presidential run off. While the statement about secession is mostly political

theater, it still jars for it illuminates the degree of anger and frustration that has become tumescent in the corpus of the political opposition. End comment.

BROWNE